

A TALK GIVEN AT INFORMATICA · WHILE EMBEDDED AT DAWN FOODS

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IS WORTHLESS. CUSTOMER LOYALTY IS PRICELESS.

Winning customers for life. The operating line I have lived on every plant floor since — and the reason Palantir gets a fellow who will not hide behind a policy.

“Once you realize that satisfaction is the lowest level of acceptable service, you at once understand the power of loyalty.”

JEFFREY GITOMER · TEAL BOOK OF TRUST · 2008 — THE LINE I STOOD ON IN THAT ROOM

Jeremy Panasuk. Informatica IPS / SEAL. Dawn Foods, Jackson, Michigan. I gave this talk to my own company while I was still on the customer’s floor. The slides were short. The notes were the work. This PDF is the talk plus every speaker note — the stories, the quotes, the lunch with John, the list we held ourselves to.

I am sending it with my American Tech Fellowship application so you can see the commitment, not a slogan. Palantir is a software provider. The people who run plants are the customers. Loyalty is the product after the product.

HOW TO READ THIS

Each page is one movement of the talk. The gold quote is what was on the wall. The body is what I actually said. Stage asides stayed in — that is how the room heard it.

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Packet: jpanasuk-netizen.github.io/for-american-tech · This file: JAP_CUSTOMER_LOYALTY.pdf

“Nothing happens until a sale is made.”

RED MOTLEY · 1946

WHAT I SAID IN THE ROOM

Yesterday I had a problem with one of my accounts at Bank of America. I had been with them since 1999 — all of my adult life. To sign up they gave me an MSOE T-shirt. Freshman year, that was more than enough to sign just about anything. I called and asked them to take 30-day and 60-day past-due notices off the account because of a lost or stolen card. Which of course was lost or stolen.

I get Ben on the phone. Obligatory hold. Ten minutes later he comes back: he can't click the button, but he can transfer me to Kari. I told him his iSeries profile was probably set up wrong by some goof in IT. He clicked me over fast.

On hold for Kari I am already dreaming — car loan, the condo in Wrigleyville, Cubs tickets if the stock hits \$20. If I won the mega-millions I would still stay at Informatica and keep working hard at Dawn. Kari greets me curt. Policy: report the credit accurately. She cannot help.

The customer could care less about you, your company, or your company policy — and even less about why you can't give them what they want. They want YES, or help to get to yes. If you can't help them, they will go someplace else — and take their money and their word of mouth with them.

THE DIAMOND RULE OF SERVICE · PATTERSON, 1908

If you wouldn't want it done to you, don't do it to someone else.

BofA could have kept me for life with two clicks — home loan, car loan, hundreds of thousands in interest. Because of a “policy,” I was gone. Satisfaction is the lowest acceptable service. Loyalty is a process, not a single action. The people who earn it get past success. They get to fulfillment.

“You don’t earn loyalty in a day. You earn loyalty day-by-day.”

JEFFREY GITOMER

WHAT I SAID IN THE ROOM

Easy to say. Hard to do.

I had been working at Dawn Foods in sparkling Jackson, Michigan. Highest unemployment in the United States at the time — something approaching 10%, and that only counts people “actively looking.” Jackson County was the worst in the state. Some economists put it at 12–14%.

Customer loyalty in Jackson may mean the difference between staying in business and the unemployment line. So think about who pays you.

“The president, CEO, or owner of your company does not pay you. It’s your customer that pays you. Your kids eat because customers buy. If your customers don’t buy, your kids don’t eat.”

GITOMER · THE SALES BIBLE · 1993

Once you know who pays you, it is obvious: satisfaction is the minimum amount of service we can deliver. I was not in Jackson to be satisfactory. I was there so Dawn would still want Informatica in the building when I was gone — and so the warehouse load that used to take eight hours would take one. That is loyalty you can measure. They put it on informatica.com. They still quote it: “His knowledge not only of the Informatica suite but also at the operating system level has been truly invaluable.” IPS said I was a rock star out at Dawn. That is not a personality. That is day-by-day.

WHY PALANTIR SHOULD CARE

Foundry and AIP are software people use every day. Plants do not stay for a dashboard. They stay for the person who came back the next morning. This fellowship is unpaid. I still want it. That is the same muscle.

“You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you.”

DALE CARNEGIE · HOW TO WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE · 1936

WHAT I SAID IN THE ROOM

The BI lead architect at Dawn, John, has four daughters. Sam in the Navy, in Japan. Amanda in 7th grade, just started track — 100-meter hurdles. Jordan at Georgia Tech. Darby living with her mom because she doesn't like Dad's rules. John's line: “The Marines prepared me for everything except four teenage girls in the house at the same time.”

I am not wasting your time. This is the hardest thing I do. For me, anyway. Shut up and listen. Ask questions. Carnegie said it. Robert Greene said it as Law 4: always say less than necessary. The more you talk, the more common you appear. Being liked leads to being a trusted advisor. That is the first part of a buying atmosphere.

PEOPLE LOVE TO BUY. THEY HATE TO SPEND.

Buying a beer? Love. Buying a car? Love. “How much do I have to spend to get that part replaced?” Hate. Your favorite bar raises the price fifty cents. Does price still matter? All things being equal, people want to do business with their friends. All things not being equal — they still do. Gitomer, Little Black Book of Networking, 2007.

I knew John's kids because I asked. That is not a trick. That is the work. Palantir's customers will have unofficial definitions of a good part and a night operator who invented the workaround in 2011. If you do not listen, you will ship a dashboard. If you listen, you will ship an ontology.

“And they believe in you...”

WHAT I SAID IN THE ROOM

Everyone in that room had something in common. We chose Informatica, and Informatica chose us. I could bet every one of us loved the product and thought it was the best. I believed we had the best data-integration suite in the market — 95% support renewal. John at Dawn Foods said he loved it. Best of breed.

When you are on the client site and they believe in you, they start believing in the platform. You represent the entire enterprise. Let the excitement show.

At Dawn, because of their belief in Informatica, John told Trillium they were not interested. They would go with Informatica’s data-quality solution when the funds were there. How do I know? He told me. Over lunch. Why? Because he trusts me. Why does he trust me? Because we established a friendship. He was telling our competitors he did not even want a proposal.

That is not a close. That is a relationship that closed the next product by itself. IPS upgrade work plus the DI work. Belief is downstream of like. Palantir’s stack earns the same way: not a pitch deck. A plant that tells the next vendor they are not even taking the meeting.

Tell the truth. Deliver what you promise. Do what you say. Communicate. Bring value beyond the product. Be on time.

WHAT I SAID IN THE ROOM

At Dawn a lot of things were going wrong — process and people. I did not skirt it. Tell the truth and back it with observations. Because they like you, they will try to understand where you are coming from and open other doors in the company.

There was no accountability for internal IT to deliver. No bill-back to the business. No pain for a change the business wanted. That was changing with IPS in the building. Lead by example. Deliver what you promised. Then step above it.

Before IPS, the CIO was set on a \$50–\$70/hour guy from another consulting group. John brought them in. Lackluster. That was our chance. Gene and I delivered documentation above what was expected. We were on site before the customer arrived and after they left. We made a list and held ourselves to the list. Weekly email on milestones. Lunch. Friendship is not extra. It is the channel.

Dawn had a sincere lack of project management. Velocity project plans and work-breakdown structures for BI were a major value-add. Always look for the thing that is not being done that would give the plant visibility. Show up when you said you would. If they are late, don't worry.

01 Tell the truth. Once truth is violated, trust evaporates and may never return.

02 Deliver what you promise. People hope you will. Then they measure you.

03 Do what you say you will do. Reliability is the test.

04 Communicate in a timely manner. Rapid response shows you care.

05 Bring value beyond the product. What you do to help them succeed is your character.

06 Be on time. Respect for their clock. Proof you are reliable.

Give away what you want. If you want trust, trust them. Gitomer.

“When you close a sale, you open a relationship.”

DALE CARNEGIE

WHAT I SAID IN THE ROOM

Confidence in you — and in the platform — is built on work you already did, and work other IPS people already did. Then you build confidence in the customer’s ability to do it next time without you in the chair.

At Dawn we started with the easiest thing: a quick hit to get PowerCenter 8.6 up. When we hit problems installing MDM, they already had confidence we would resolve it. They had basic integration performance issues. Adding an index over a mapping that did an update increased confidence tremendously. Resolving a support issue by getting sales and the sales consultant in the room built confidence that the sales team would still be there after the sale.

THE LOOP I STILL RUN

Quick win. Hard problem. They watch you stay. Then they can stay. Navy Federal was the same motion years later: scope the 3,000-hour V1, install the stack, write the test strategy, train their team, wrap the package, finish ahead of schedule. That is confidence you can hand off.

If they like you, and they believe in you, and they trust you, and they have confidence in you... then they may buy from you.

GITOMER · THE SALES BIBLE · 1993 · LAST SLIDE

Summation, then questions. One more time, because it is the whole talk: people love to buy, but they hate to be sold.

THIS IS NOT A VINTAGE SLIDE DECK. THIS IS HOW I STILL SHOW UP.

I am applying to Palantir's American Tech Fellowship. You asked for hungry builders who will not wait for perfect specs. This talk is the proof that I already treated the customer as the person who pays me — not the ticket queue.

YES — OR HELP TO GET TO YES.

Dawn Foods: 8 hours to under 1. Featured. Rock star. Navy Federal: scoped, 3,000-hour V1, complete package, ahead of schedule. 19 of 20 crisis accounts recovered. Analyst to program manager because plants kept asking for me by name. Then a 4070 in the garage so I would have something to measure besides a Jira.

Palantir is the bleeding edge of software people actually use. Foundry and AIP on American operations. I want that stack the same way Dawn wanted the next Informatica product — because they believed in the person in the room. Unpaid. Two weeknights. Twelve weeks. I am not here for a stipend. I am here to earn loyalty from a cohort and a platform the way I earned it on a bakery floor in Jackson.

Customer satisfaction is worthless. Customer loyalty is priceless. That was the title in 2008. That is still the job.

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Also on the packet site: Cover letter · Resume · This talk

Original source: Informatica IPS talk, Dawn Foods engagement. All seven slides and all speaker notes included. Lightly typeset for reading — stories uncut.